

What is claimed is:

1. A method for consolidating multiple records associated with a single entity and stored in at least one record repository, comprising the steps of:
  - identifying a first record;
  - identifying a second record;
  - applying record matching criteria to compare data element content of said first and second identified records to determine commonality data indicative of a likelihood said first and second records are associated with a common entity; and
  - merging said first and second record content into a composite record in response to said determined commonality data.
2. A method according to claim 1, including the step of,
  - selecting one of said first and second records as a surviving record based on at least one of, (a) earliest date of record creation and (b) relative content of said first and second records and
  - transferring a first identified element of the non-selected record into said surviving record to form said composite record.
3. A method according to claim 2, including the step of,
  - substituting identified elements of the selected record for corresponding elements of the non-selected record for inclusion in said composite record.
4. A method according to claim 1, including the step of,
  - initiating generation of a record comparison menu showing a first data item of said first record and a corresponding second data item of said second record and prompting a user to select one of said first and second data items for inclusion in said composite record.
5. A method according to claim 4, wherein
  - said record comparison menu shows said first data item of said first record and said corresponding second data item of said second record side by side for comparison.

6. A method according to claim 1, including the step of, initiating generation of a record comparison menu showing a first data item of said first record and a corresponding second data item of said second record in response to detection of at least one of, (a) a particular data element in either of said first or said second record and (b) a difference in data content of a record field common to said first and second records.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said steps of identifying first and second records comprise identifying said first and second records using first and second record identifiers respectively.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of applying said record matching criteria comprises parsing said first and second records to identify presence of a plurality of predetermined record fields using probabilistic matching for particular text items.

9. A method according to claim 1, wherein said commonality data comprises a measure quantifying detected occurrence of predetermined record items in both said first and said second records.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein said predetermined record items comprise at least one of, (a) text strings and (b) record fields identified by keyword text items.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein said merging step includes merging clinical data comprising at least one of (a) electro-cardiograph (ECG) or electro-encephalograph (EEG) data, (b) x-ray data, (c) laboratory test result data, (d) physical characteristic data, (e) previous diagnosis data, (f) allergy data, (g) ventilation data, (h) blood oxygen or pressure data, (i) infusion pump data and (j) pulse data.

12. A method according to claim 1, wherein said entity comprises at least one of, (a) a patient, (b) an individual, (c) a company, (d) an organization, (e) a goods item (f) a resource and (g) a record.

13. A method according to claim 1, including the step of,  
at least one of, (a) deleting a redundant identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record from said composite record, and (b) amending an identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record in said composite record.

14. A method for consolidating multiple healthcare records associated with a patient and stored in at least one record repository, comprising the steps of:  
in response to a single entry of user identification and password information for accessing a plurality of concurrently operating applications for,  
identifying a first record;  
identifying a second record;  
applying record matching criteria to compare data element content of said first and second identified records to determine commonality data indicative of a likelihood said first and second records are associated with a common patient; and  
merging said first and second record content into a composite record in response to said determined commonality data.

15. A method according to claim 14, including the step of,  
at least one of, (a) deleting a redundant identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record from said composite record, and (b) amending an identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record in said composite record.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein  
said redundant identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record comprises an identifier identifying at least one of, (a) a specific patient, (b) a patient record, (c) an element of a patient record and (d) particular patient clinical data.

17. A method according to claim 14, including the step of,  
selecting one of said first and second records as a surviving record based on at least one of, (a) earliest date of record creation and (b) relative content of said first and second records and  
automatically transferring a first identified element of the non-selected record into said surviving record to form said composite record.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein

said transferred first identified element comprises at least one of, (a) a user identifier, and (b) record entries concerning medical services delivered to said patient.

19. A method according to claim 17, including the step of,

automatically substituting identified non-clinical elements of the selected record for corresponding elements of the non-selected record for inclusion in said composite record.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein

said substituted identified elements comprise at least one of, (a) patient address information, (b) patient name, (c) patient physical characteristics and (d) patient non-clinical data.

21. A method according to claim 19, including the step of,

applying a substitution rule for automatically substituting a particular element of said identified elements, said rule comprising at least one of, (a) include only said particular element of said first record in said composite record, (b) include only said particular element of said second record in said composite record, (c) include only a first record particular element, if present in said first record, in said composite record, and (d) include only a second record particular element, if present in said second record, in said composite record.

22. A method according to claim 21, including the step of,

wherein different substitution rules are applicable to particular data items of said first and second records in response to user selection.

23. A method according to claim 14, wherein

said merging step comprises the step of incorporating clinical data of both said first and second records in said composite record.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein

said step of merging clinical data comprises automatically merging clinical data of said first and second records unless a predetermined condition is satisfied indicating said clinical data is to be merged subject to manual involvement.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein  
said predetermined condition identifies at least one of, (a) said patient  
is on a physician patient list and (b) said clinical data of said second record duplicates  
said clinical data of said first record.

25. A method according to claim 14, including the step of,  
applying different rules in merging clinical data than in merging non-  
clinical data of said first and second records.

26. A method for consolidating multiple records associated with a  
single entity and stored in at least one record repository, comprising the steps of:  
identifying first and second records as being associated with a single  
entity;

determining from stored record information whether said first and  
second records are indicated as being associated with different entities;

in response to said determination, applying record matching criteria to  
compare data element content of said first and second identified records to determine  
commonality data indicative of a likelihood said first and second records are  
associated with a common entity; and

merging said first and second record content into a composite record in  
response to said determined commonality data.

27. A method according to claim 26, including the step of,  
receiving and storing an indication said first and second records are  
associated with different entities in response to a previous determination said first and  
second records were falsely identified as being associated with a single entity.

28. A method for providing a user interface supporting consolidating multiple healthcare records associated with a patient and stored in at least one record repository, comprising the steps of:

initiating generation of at least one display window supporting merging data elements from first and second records into a composite record, said at least one display window including,

a display element prompting a user to select one of a plurality of predetermined rules to be applied in merging non-clinical data of said first and second records,

a display element prompting a user to select one of said first and second records as a surviving record, and

initiating merger of data elements from first and second records into a composite record in response to user selection of a displayed icon.

29. A method according to claim 28, wherein

said at least one display window includes,

a display element prompting a user to select one of a plurality of predetermined rules to be applied in merging clinical data of said first and second records.

30. A method according to claim 28, wherein

said at least one display window includes,

a display element prompting a user to at least one of, (a) delete a redundant identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record from said composite record, and (b) amend an identifier identifying an item common to both said first and second record in said composite record.